ABOUT HIBISCUS IN OHIO

- Mrs. T. D. Edmonson

A few weeks ago in answer to my request you sent me information about the Society and asked me to write an article for the Seed Pod about my indoor grown Hibiscus. I have never ever written anything for publication and wouldn't know how to do so, however if anything in my letter is worth printing you are welcome to use it.

Because of poor health I have not been able to travel much for quite a number of years. Therefore I am, I think, one of the country's most widely traveled arm chair travelers. When I become interested in a certain place, I start to read everything I can get hold of about the place. That is how my interest in Hibiscus came about.

I became intensely interested in Hawaii. I am a flower lover and avid gardener so I seemed to be challenged to try to grow some of the plants I read about, in my own garden; failing to be able to grow tropicals in the outer garden lead me to try my hand indoors.

I had no greenhouse nor even a large window to devote to them. But with only one room to use for it, and that room having only two small windows, I ordered my first plants from a Clearwater, Florida nursery.

My first three plants were a double peach blow Hibiscus, a Clerodendron Thomsouiae and an Ixora. I was successful in bringing all three into bloom and kept each growing until they became too large for a 95 pound woman to handle in their big 14 inch pots. Each had a spread of about thirty inches and the same height.

After seeing them bloom I decided that the Hibiscus was my flower. I gave the others away and continued to grow Hibiscus. My next one was a double red, then a single bright camellia pink with a dark center and white edges.

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Most of my double blooms were about seven inches in diameter and about the same in depth. There would be as many as four at one time in bloom. My plants usually bloomed from August to October and then again from March to April. I used only monthly feedings of liquid Hy-po-nex and about every six months one application of Vigoro in the soil of each pot. They had to endure whatever dryness or humidity happened to be present in the house, and a temperature between 65 and 75 most of the time.

In summer when outside night temperatures reached 50 degrees steadily, I would take them outside and set them under my trees so they would not become sun scalded. There I leave them until night temperatures drop back again to 50 degrees. Then I trim them back severely in order to have room for them and bring them inside. Or, if they are still blooming and full of buds, I bring them in as they are until the buds have all bloomed, then they get a severe cutting back.

From the cuttings removed, I put several into six inch pots of peat and sand, using Rootone powder, and cover pot and cutting with larg plastic bags. I watch to keep them moist and by spring I have new small plants to replace the ones that are now so large I can no longer keep them inside.

This summer I finally got to visit Florida where I saw so many lovely Hibiscus. I was captivated by a little one on a varigated bush having small flowers with fringed petals. I hope I wil be able to find a source for it.

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SAD NEWS

The Sunset Chapter was shocked and saddened by the passing of Lee Napoli recently. She will be missed by all of us.

The Executive Secretary lost his setp-father last week also.